



Frank G. Cousins, Jr.
Sheriff



Jonathan W. Blodgett
District Attorney

ESSEX COUNTY



2008 Calendar

Elder Abuse Edition



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What is Elder Abuse?



Elder abuse refers to any knowing, intentional or negligent act by a caregiver, a relative or any other person, that willfully or through negligence causes a senior harm or creates a serious risk or harm, including:

- Physical Abuse/Harm: Victims are kicked, punched, slapped, beaten, even raped. Pain, injury or death may result.
- Emotional Harm: Older people may be intentionally isolated or denied companionship. Abusers may threaten or verbally attack them.
- Financial Exploitation: Abusers may steal or mismanage money, property, savings or credit cards. Older people may be forced to sign a will or turn over assets.
- Neglect: Failure to provide medicine, food or personal care (such as help to the bathroom) is a common form of abuse.



January 2008

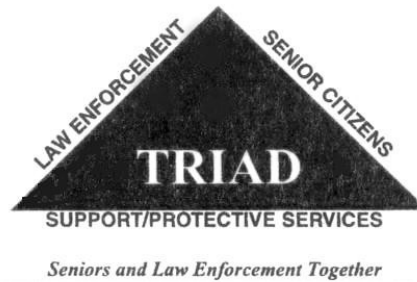
ESSEX COUNTY TRIAD

Essex County Sheriff's Department
 20 Manning Avenue
 Middleton, MA 01949
 Attn: Capt. Jason R. Ebacher
 Phone: (978) 750-1900 x. 3322

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Why should I be concerned with Elder Abuse?

- Elder abuse is an extremely serious problem and very common.
- Incidents of Elder Abuse occur with alarming frequency. They occur in families from all backgrounds and in every part of the United States.
- Elder Abuse is often hidden as most cases go unreported.
 - ♦ Many victims are:
 - Ashamed;
 - Unable to report abuse; or
 - Fearful of what may happen if they do.



February 2008

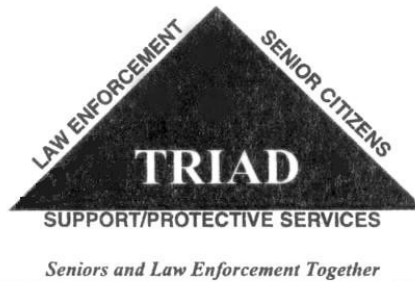
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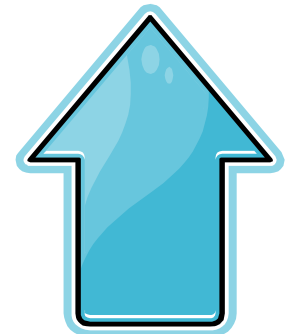
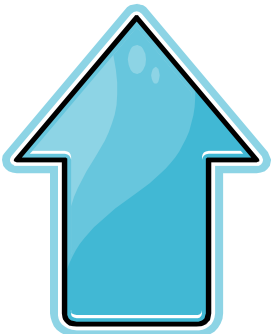


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Elder Abuse on the Rise

Reports of Elder Abuse has increased 150 % between 1986 and 1996. A national incidence study conducted in 1996 found the following:

- 551,011 persons, aged 60 and over, experienced abuse, neglect, and/or self-neglect in a year period;
- Almost four times as many new incidents of abuse, neglect, and/or self-neglect were not reported;
- Among the known perpetrators of abuse and neglect, the perpetrator was a family member in 90 % of the cases; two-thirds of the perpetrators were adult children or spouses.





March 2008

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Who are the victims?

Victims are most likely to be:

- Age 75 or over
- Women
- Dependent on the abuser for basic needs
- Suffering from a mental or physical illness
- A family member of the abuser

Many other victims are financially independent and in good health.



April 2008

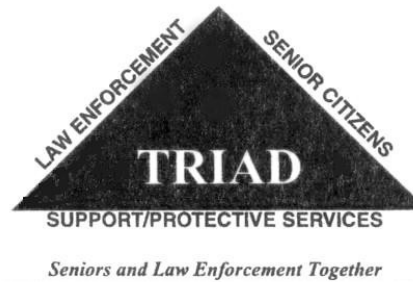
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Who are the Abusers?

Usually, they are family members who are acting as caregivers. Abusers often suffer from:

1. **Stress**: When added to personal and financial problems, the strain of caring for an older person can cause frustration which increases the possibility of abuse.
2. **Alcohol/Drug Problems**: Alcoholism and other drug use may play a major role in elder abuse.
3. **Dependency**: While a victim may rely on the abuser for basic needs, the reverse may also be true. The abuser may depend on the older person for basic needs, especially money or housing.



May 2008

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Elder Abuse Warning Signs

Physical Abuse / Neglect / Abandonment

- Bruises, pressure marks, broken bones, abrasions, and burns.
- Bruises or bleeding around the genitals or breast.
- Bedsores, unattended medical needs, poor hygiene, and unusual weight loss.





June 2008

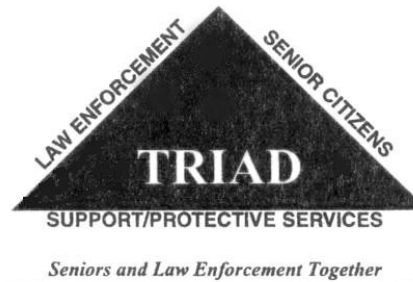
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Elder Abuse Warning Signs

Financial Abuse / Exploitation

- Sudden changes in bank accounts or banking practices, including unexplained withdrawals of large sums of money by a person accompanying the elder.
- The inclusion of additional names on an elder's bank signature card.
- Unauthorized withdrawal of the elder's funds using the elder's ATM card.
- Abrupt changes in a will or other financial documents.
- Unexplained disappearance of funds or valuable possessions.
- Substandard care being provided or bills going unpaid despite the availability of funds.





July 2008

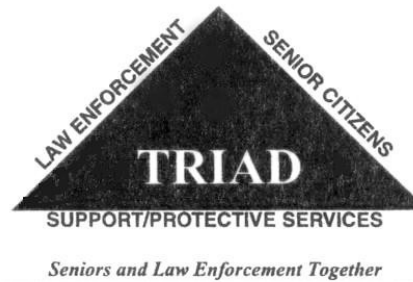
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Reducing the Risk of Financial Abuse

- Create a limited power of attorney. Make sure the power of attorney can be trusted and limit the actions the agent is authorized to perform.
- Use direct deposit for Social Security or other benefit checks.
- Use automatic bill paying. Routine bills can be automatically paid from a checking or savings account.
- Communicate with the bank. Banks are often the first to see questionable financial activity.
- Check caregivers' references carefully. Be wary of a caregiver who tries to isolate an older person.



August 2008

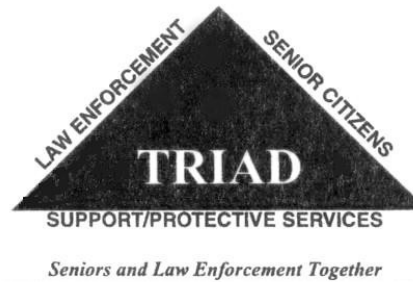
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Why does Elder Abuse Continue?

- Physical/mental illness of the abused.
- Lack of acknowledgement or refusing to believe that abuse is occurring.
- Fear of Abuser or shame.
- Dependence on Abuser.
- Lack of Awareness of Community Services and Awareness: Older people may not be aware of the professional agencies available.





September 2008

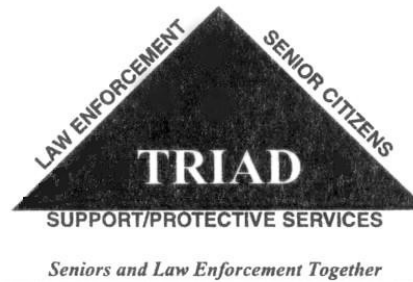
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Stopping Elder Abuse

- Prevention Programs: Designed to help identify and assist victims of elder abuse and their families. More research into the causes, treatment and prevention of elder abuse is also needed.
- Education: To fight negative attitudes toward older people and people who have disabilities.



- Resources: For older people and their caregivers. These include:
 - home health aides
 - meal delivery
 - day care
 - transportation
 - counseling
 - help with daily living tasks



- Greater Public Awareness: No policy or program will succeed unless concerned citizens get involved.
- Legislation: To help older people use the courts, find treatment and gain protection from further abuse.



October 2008

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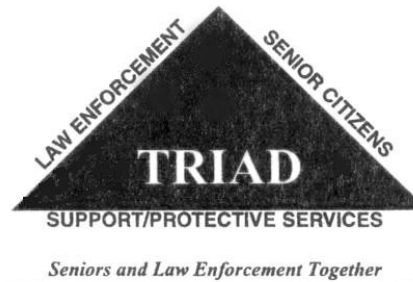
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What happens when Elder Abuse is reported?

Elder abuse often goes unreported because the victim is embarrassed, ashamed or dependent on the abuser in some way.

It is important to remember that elder care service providers will work with the victim to determine what services will alleviate or end the abuse.

A victim's rights and wishes will always be respected.



November 2008

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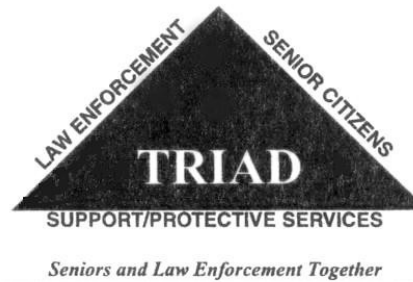
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What Services are available?

Senior care agencies offer services:

In the home:

- Bilingual Services
- Home Visits
- Home Delivered Meals
- Homemaker
- Health Aide Services
- Money Management

In a Crisis:

- Counseling
- Family Intervention
- Legal Assistance
- Safety Planning

In the Community:

- Housing
- Senior Centers
- Transportation
- Socialization



December 2008

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Help is Available...

**Executive Office of Elder Affairs
Elder Abuse Hotline (24 hours)
1-800-922-2275**

**Attorney General's Elder Hotline
1-888-243-5337**

**Elder Services of Merrimack Valley,
Lawrence
978-683-7747 or 1-800-892-0890**

**Greater Lynn Senior Services
1-781-599-0110**

**North Shore Elder Services, Danvers
1-978-750-4540**

**SeniorCare, Gloucester
1-978-281-1750**

**Or contact your local senior center,
Council on Aging or Police
Department**

In an emergency call 911

**Services are available to all seniors
regardless of income level**